1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34

[p.91a]

181 with the larger national economy. Some of the
556 deficiencies of this report spring from the fact that study of these larger economic systems has not yet been made. It is apparent that the Cherán system functions in considerable part as a money economy and that in many respects it is essentially a European type economy.

Nevertheless, there are some differences of possible significance. Despite the fact the economy may be studied in monetary terms, wealth concepts do not revolve wholly about money and its values. Land itself has a surprisingly low money value, yet it is the major basis for evaluating individual wealth. Maize also occupies a higher position than its money value would indicate. Money is valued after maize, not before it, and the man who has money but no maize is apt to be regarded as

[text continues on top of p. 91b]

THE COMMUNITY

128 The community of Cherán may be viewed in several ways. There are, first of all, the physical attributes of the town, its layout, subdivisions, and boundaries. There are the objective characteristics of the people who occupy the area, their numbers, demographic characteristics, and groupings. Yet other aspects of the community are the bonds which hold it together and the groupings within which the individual functions as a part of the larger entity—the family, the kinship group, the various institutions such as the *compadrazgo*. The organization of the community politically is also of great importance: the structure of government, its management, organization, functions, and obligations. Finally, there looms important in Cherán the ceremonial and religious organization. Although logically forming a part of this section, discussion of the latter is deferred for a separate treatment.

THE MUNICIPIO

632 Cherán is, first of all, a *municipio*, an admin-
634 istrative unit, smaller than the usual county in the United States but having somewhat similar characteristics. The ordinary *municipio* in Michoacán consists of a *cabecera* or head town, somewhat similar to our county seat in functions. In most Tarascan *municipios* about half

[text continues on middle of p. 91b]

181 poor indeed if there should be a maize shortage.
556 Even in normal times, the man who has to buy maize is pitied, even though he has plenty of money.

Although further analysis might be desirable, it also seems that the emphasis on nonproductive expenditures is higher in Cherán than in our own culture. The outlay in cash and goods involved in religious festivals, weddings, and similar events, seems much higher proportionately. Men often forego material advantage also for the spiritual rewards of offices connected with the church, an aspect which has not yet been discussed but which will be described later in detail. It seems doubtful if the motivations in these cases correspond entirely to those of the "conspicuous expenditures" of our own society.

THE COMMUNITY

632 the population live in the *cabecera*. Subordi-
634 nate to the *cabecera* ordinarily are a number of *tenencias*, villages of several hundred to more than a thousand population, and rancherias or other small units. All these subordinate units are administered from the *cabecera* through local, appointed delegates, the *jefes de tenencia*. Theoretically the residents in the *tenencias* and other units play an equal part with the inhabitants of the *cabecera*; in practice, government is controlled from the *cabecera*.

Cherán differs from the usual pattern in that the *municipio* consists of the *cabecera* and one small rancheria. Cherán, the town, is thus about twice as large as most Tarascan *cabeceras*, although the *municipio* has about the same population as others. Formerly the situation was somewhat different, with the *tenencia* of Cheranástico forming part of the *municipio*. As the result of circumstances to be related later, the people of Cheranástico withdrew from the *municipio* of Cherán and now form part of the *municipio* of Paracho. Had the population of Cheranástico been sufficiently large, it might even have become a separate *municipio*. The withdrawal of Cheranástico emphasizes the fact that *cabeceras* and *tenencias* have their respective boundaries within the larger limits of the *municipio*.

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
Sierra Tarascans

The general situation of the *municipio* has already been discussed in the first section of this paper. That discussion and maps 1, 2, and 3 indicate the main features, and no further amplification seems necessary.

The *municipio* has fairly well defined boundaries, although there are usually disputes with neighboring communities. Thus Cherán currently has disputes with Cheranástico and Arantepaqua. The boundaries are marked in various ways. In the cultivated areas the boundaries are marked with stone walls. Where water courses form the boundaries, no markers are placed, but in the woods, a strip 4 or 5 meters wide is cleared along the boundary. This is done by communal labor, and when the line needs clearing again an assembly is called and a day fixed for the work. Every male is supposed to go. The Municipal Representative (described later) is supposed to lead the party.

THE TOWN AND ITS SUBDIVISIONS

Cherán is a compact and essentially urban settlement with a population of about 5,000. Few North Americans, unfamiliar with the concentrated settlement forms of Mexican towns, would imagine it contained anything like this population. There are no suburbs and very little straggling out of houses from the main center. Around the outskirts the lots are a little bigger and the density of population is less but the transition from town to open fields is nevertheless abrupt.

The layout of the town is undistinguished. A central plaza with a fountain, *portales* or sidewalks covered with arches about it, the municipal building, school, priest's residence, and church may be duplicated in hundreds of Mexican towns. The plaza is not today the center of the settlement geographically. Undoubtedly the town has grown since the time of its founding, and because of the deep *barranca* to the north, expansion has been in the other directions, leaving the plaza north of the present center of town by two or three blocks.

Radiating from the plaza is a network of streets laid out in a rectangular grid which makes only minimal concessions to the irregularities of the terrain. The enclosed blocks or *manzanas* are utilized as administrative divi-

[P. 249]

that a new upward trend has been established. On the other hand, there has been a considerable increase in the population of the Sierra and Lake towns since 1750, which probably accounts for the level curve during the 19th century, in spite of drastic areal recession in speech during that period (fig. 2). Today areal recession is still in progress, but actual numbers of Tarascans appear to be increasing. The question is: Can the growth in number of Tarascan-speaking children continue to exceed or equal that of the children (of Tarascan speaking parents) who fail to learn the language or cease to use it in later life? Assuming equal rates of infant mortality and similar health facilities for both groups, it would appear that, owing to cultural changes now in progress within the Tarascan area, the indigenous speech will eventually dis-

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TARASCAN

SETTLEMENTS

The early Spanish adventurers and friars found Tarascans living (like many sedentary Indians of the New World) in agglomerated settlements, the larger of which the Spaniards called pueblos, the smaller, *rancherías* or *estancias*. The pueblo and the *ranchería* (*rancho*) have remained the basic units of settlement in the Tarascan area, as in most parts of Mexico.[22] In size present Tarascan pueblos range from 200 to 3,400 inhabitants; the ranchos, from 9 to 900. Invariably the modern indigenous ranchos are offspring settlements from a pueblo nearby. For instance, the 11 ranchos on the southern and eastern slopes of Cerro de Patamban were formed by families, which for political or economic (land) reasons, left the mother pueblo, Pamatácuaro. Sirío, a former *rancho* of Pamatácuaro, was made a pueblo and *tenencia* ca. 1926, its name being changed to Jesús Díaz. By such a process agglomerated settlements begin and develop. Moreover, the *ranchos* on the Tarí-uk'éri Peninsula, Lake Pátzcuaro, were founded 50 or 60 years ago by fisher-

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[22] Although in general these two types of settlement are differentiated by size, the terms "pueblo" and "rancho" have acquired political connotations. From the point of view of State and Federal Governments the basic political unit in Mexico is the municipio, which may contain many pueblos and ranchos. Usually the largest pueblo within this political unit is named the *cabecera*, or chief administrative town. The affairs of the *cabecera* and those of the municipio as a whole are administered by a *presidente* or mayor. The remaining pueblos in the municipio are regarded as *tenencias*, each headed by a *jefe*. The ranchos are dependencies of certain pueblos, local authority being vested in the *diputado de orden*. Upon obtaining sufficient size, prestige, or political influence, a pueblo may be elevated to the rank of *villa* or even *ciudad*. Because of historical prestige small (1,627 mestizo inhabitants) Tzintzuntzan holds the title of *ciudad*. Such rank, however, in no way changes the political function of the town.